

**Supplemental
Notice of Allowability**

Application No.

09/544,283

Examiner

Thomas K Pham

Applicant(s)

SAKAGUCHI ET AL.

Art Unit

2121

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to 4/16/04.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1-11.
3. ☒ The drawings filed on 06 April 2000 are accepted by the Examiner.
4. ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.
THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

5. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
 6. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
7. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08),
Paper No./Mail Date _____
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit
of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6. ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413),
Paper No./Mail Date _____
7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other _____

Examiner Amendment

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Mr. Gene S. Stockman on December 1, 2004.

The application has been amended as follows:

- Claim 4: **add** the phrase "**a processor unit for**" immediately before the paragraph "generating at least one virtual ... said virtual workflow", but after "comprising the steps of:" on page 5 of the amendment dated 4/16/2004.
- Claim 6: **remove** the term "**means for**" immediately after "comprising the step of:" on page 8 of the amendment dated 4/16/2004.

Reasons for Allowance

2. Claims 1-11 are allowed.
3. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

While Smirnov teaches a method for managing a plurality of actual execution workflows, each thereof for executing a flow of work on the basis of a virtual workflow for monitoring the plurality of actual execution workflows, implying a virtual representation of a real world of manufacturing environment.

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Cheng teaches virtual link in a dynamic organizational database to support collaborative computing in a global enterprise.

And Kumar (document cited on 12/01/2004) teaches operational control mechanisms in workflow management systems by providing the flexibility in process modelling and control, handling exceptions, and exploits possibility of increasing system throughput and response time. Kumar does not teach or suggest a technique for generating virtual workflows or a link between virtual and actual workflows as part of its workflow management systems.

None of these references taken either alone or in combination discloses a method and device for managing a plurality of actual execution workflows, each thereof, expressed by electronic data, for executing a flow of work, said actual execution workflows each including a plurality of nodes having all the claimed features of applicant's instant invention, specifically including: generating at least one virtual workflow, expressed by electronic data, including a plurality of nodes, on the basis of selected nodes of the actual execution workflows. The selected nodes are selected by first users of the actual execution workflows and permitted to be disclosed to a second user of the virtual workflow. Additionally, the prior art does not teach linking at least one process node of each of the actual execution workflows with a node of the virtual workflow, a storage unit for storing a link ID or for storing a virtual workflow definition. Also, there is no motivation to combine the Smirnov reference with the Cheng or Kumar references to meet these limitations. It is for these reasons that applicant's invention defines over the prior art of record.

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Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

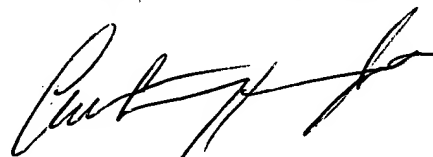
Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to examiner *Thomas Pham*; whose telephone number is (571) 272-3689, Monday to Thursday from 6:30 AM - 5:00 PM EST or contact Supervisor *Mr. Anthony Knight* at (571) 272-3687.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Thomas Pham
Patent Examiner

TP

December 1, 2004



Anthony Knight
Supervisory Patent Examiner
Group 3600